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**\*\* THE BUILDING INDUSTRY** employs the largest proportion of the working population, i.e., 8 to 10%, and contributes in the same proportion to the national product. It makes up half of the value of all investment. Figures of this order convey some idea of the importance of the sector in the running of our economy and society.

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*The information published in this bulletin covers the European Communities' activities in the fields of industrial development, protection of the environment and consumer welfare. It is therefore not limited to recording Commission decisions or opinions.*

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ANNEX 1 gives a general outline of the programme to be undertaken in this field, as approved by the European Commission.

- \*\* International Women's Year is an opportunity for concentrating public attention on the 130 MILLION WOMEN living in the European Community.

ANNEX 2 is a summary of a speech on the subject of women who go out to work, which Dr Hillery, the Member of the Commission with special responsibility for Social Affairs, made in Dublin. There are no fewer than 35 million such women, i.e., over one third of the entire working population.

- \*\* Concerned to protect both the environment and public health, the Commission has been examining existing standards for the quality of water in BATHING AREAS. In a proposed directive, which it has forwarded to the Council of Ministers, the Commission lists a number of measures which, if respected, should help to guarantee the quality of water in bathing areas.

ANNEX 3 shows that the European Commission has gone further than any other current national regulations.

- \*\* In one year, the number of UNEMPLOYED has gone up in the Community by over a million. The Commission is examining the possibilities of wider intervention by the European Social Fund to help workers affected by the crisis, thereby sharing the concern expressed by the Parliamentary Committee for Social Affairs.

COUNTRY	1973	1974	Change '73/74
Belgium	101 865 (4.0%)	140 100 (5.4%)	+ 38 235 (+ 38%)
Denmark	18 600 (2.2%)	79 100 (9.2%)	+ 60 500 (+ 325%)
Germany	485 631 (2.2%)	945 916 (4.2%)	+ 460 285 (+ 95%)
France	455 300 (2.7%)	690 000 (4.1%)	+ 234 700 (+ 52%)
Ireland	68 513 (5.1%)	89 935 (8.0%)	+ 21 422 (+ 31%)
Italy	981 200 (5.1%)	1 013 800 (5.3%)	+ 32 600 (+ 3%)
Luxembourg	56	124	+ 68
The Netherlands	130 942 (3.6%)	180 790 (4.7%)	+ 49 848 (+ 38%)
United Kingdom	493 561 (2.2%)	621 690 (2.7%)	+ 128 129 (+ 26%)
Northern Ireland	27 277 (5.4%)	32 170 (6.3%)	+ 4 893 (+ 18%)

\*\* The total FINES imposed to date by the European Commission on 42 firms that have infringed the rules of competition amount to 10 772 500 units of account (1 u.a. = US \$1.2) for the nine cases involved. In five of these cases appeals were lodged with the Court of Justice of the European Communities. In all cases where the Court upheld the Commission's decision, the firms involved have paid the fines in full. In the case of "European Sugar Industry" and "Papiers peints de Belgique" the fines have not been paid, however, since the decisions are still being contested. The Commission can enforce payment of amounts owing to it. So far the Commission has had to resort to this enforcement procedure on one occasion only (ACF Chemiefarma N.V.). The question of actual enforcement did not arise, however, because the firm paid up after the procedure had been initiated.

\*\* Did the ACTIVITIES OF THE OIL COMPANIES following the Arab-Israeli war respect the Community's competition rules? The answer should be available when an investigation conducted by the Commission's departments is completed. Twenty-one cases have been examined, and six are still under study. In addition, following a complaint lodged by an independent distributor in the Netherlands, the Commission has brought an action against a number of oil companies for abusing their dominant positions. When he addressed the European Parliament, Mr Borschette, a Member of the European Commission, confirmed that the Commission report would be forwarded to Parliament. A judgment on the activities of the oil companies will only be possible when all the results of the enquiry are available.

\*\* In accordance with the new strategy in energy policy adopted by the European Commission, the use of HYDROCARBON FUELS IN POWER STATIONS of the conventional type should gradually decline. The statistical table below shows the potential output, using coal as compared with oil products, in public utility power stations (position as at 1 January 1974). Since some plants are able to burn more than one type of fuel, the figures for anyone country cannot be added together.

PUBLIC UTILITY THERMAL POWER STATIONS: CONVENTIONAL TYPE

Position: 1 January 1974	Number of plants capable of using:		Net maximum capacity when using:		Percentage of total thermal power	
	Coal	Oil products	Coal	Oil products	Coal	Oil products
			MW		%	
Germany	336	457	17 300	12 663	47	35
France	47	115	7 232	13 191	42	71
Italy	42	283	7 431	15 699	47	99
The Netherlands	36	133	2 191	8 179	21	79
Belgium	37	89	1 994	4 479	36	80
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	544	229	47 115	16 172	77	26
Ireland	4	26	101	1 111	7	76
Denmark	53	46	2 526	4 521	48	86
Community	1 099	1 378	85 890	76 015	56	49

- \*\* At present 75% of the installed capacity of conventional thermal power stations in the Community can operate on one fuel only - coal, lignite, gas or oil products. The remaining conventional plants have multi-fuel facilities giving them a choice between two or even three fuels.
- \*\* WORKER PARTICIPATION on company management bodies is such an important problem of such importance that it can only be solved in Community terms. This, in a nutshell, is the opinion of UNICE (Union des Industries de la Communauté européenne = Union of Industries of the European Community) which is afraid that some governments of the Nine may, without considering the situation in neighbouring countries, unilaterally adopt measures likely to compromise the future development of the coordination already achieved by the Community in this area. "Unilateral provisions would consolidate or even heighten existing inequalities", UNICE declares and adds, "There is a legitimate fear that national action may threaten Community progress".
- \*\* In order to define more clearly THE AIMS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH and technological development in Europe, the European Commission recently requested a specialist institute to carry out a study aimed at identifying the NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS REVEALED BY PUBLIC OPINION in Europe, as regards scientific research.
- \*\* URANIUM DEPOSITS in Member States of the Community represent a reasonably safe reserve of some 40 000 metric tons of uranium and reserves are estimated at about the same tonnage. This can be gathered from reports forwarded to Member States by the European Commission, which deal with prospecting activities, production and uranium mining investments already effected or planned in 1972 in their territories. At that date, some 4.5 million u.a. (1 u.a. = US \$1) was invested in prospecting for uranium. Production, almost entirely in France, rose to about 1 500 metric tons. The Commission has forwarded the reports to the Council of Ministers, emphasizing that these own resources might be of advantage to the Community both as a strategic reserve and as a stabilizing factor, should the market be subject to temporary strain. The Commission therefore feels that prospecting for new deposits should continue, and that those already identified should be explored, in order to discover their potential. In addition, the Commission draws the Council of Ministers' attention to the fact that it could be to the Commission's advantage also to have information available as to the activities of Member State mining companies in non-member countries, so that accurate assessment could be made of the potential supplies of natural uranium open to the Community, as compared with the overall energy background.
- \*\* The European Commission has forwarded a proposal to the Council of Ministers for two directives on the harmonization of standards for MEDICAL ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES and 10-400 keV X-ray ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHS. Approximation of Member State's laws and standardization within the EEC of the various types of appliances, which would ensure their free circulation, should be completed and in force as from 1 July 1977.

\*\* An expert who was charged with a study to increase the rate of WASTE PAPER RECYCLING in the Community has forwarded his report to the Commission. A team of specialists in this field and representatives of the industries involved discussed the report on 28 January 1975. The information contained in the study permits the conclusion that it would be possible to achieve quite an appreciable increase in the amount of waste paper recovered and recycled. A special research effort would be needed however, and it would also be necessary to ensure that the waste paper market was better organized - particularly through control of the factors responsible for abnormal price fluctuations.

\*\* VEGETABLE PRODUCTION in the Community was examined following publication of the latest data assembled by the Statistical Office of the European Communities. In most Community countries it was too wet in the autumn, which hindered autumn sowing, and the resulting delay as compared with a normal year is often considerable. Cereal production will probably be down in 1975, since replacing winter by summer grains could produce lower yields. According to the latest estimates the total grain harvest in the Community (excluding rice), amounts to 107.8 million metric tons in 1974 (compared to 105.6 million metric tons in 1973). This record production is the result of a unit yield of 40.3 quintals, which has never previously been achieved. The wheat harvest yielded the enormous figure of 45.0 million metric tons (as against 41.4 million metric tons in 1973). This was due to 3% more land being put under wheat, and to a yield 5% higher than in 1973. Similarly, a record 34.7 million metric tons of barley was the result of an exceptional yield of 39.7 quintals per hectare.

\*\* MISLEADING ADVERTISING in the Community, and, of course, also the COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY will be the two main points discussed by the Consumers' Consultative Committee (see IRT No 202), at its next meeting in Brussels on 28 February. The agenda was prepared by the Committee's Bureau at its meeting in Berlin on 22 January.

\*\* CARBON MONOXIDE'S harmful effects on the population were studied in detail at an international symposium held in Luxembourg in December 1973. This was organized by the European Commission as part of the Community's environmental protection programme. The proceedings, bound in one 400 page volume (Bfrs 800), are now available from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, P.O. Box 1003, Luxembourg.

## THE BUILDING INDUSTRY IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

The European Commission has decided to launch an action programme in the building sector. The programme has two aims - to establish a unified market, and to encourage productivity in the sector, particularly by progressively introducing industrialization. The building industry employs the largest proportion of the working population, 8 to 10%, and contributes in the same proportion to the national product. It makes up half of the value of all investment. Figures of this order convey some idea of the importance of the sector in the running of our economy and society.

In addition, the building industry makes particularly intensive use of materials, semi-finished products, prefabricated units and all types of building equipment and machinery bought from a wide range of manufacturing industries. These purchases account for 40-50% of the end production value of buildings and other civil engineering work; the percentage tends to increase with the progress of technology and the search for greater productivity. It therefore follows that problems in the building sector have an appreciable effect on the activities of its supply industries.

So far hardly any effort has been made to establish a common market in the building sector. This is partly due to its special features:

- its products are not mass-produced in a factory but built piece by piece at the site;
- it employs a large number of small-scale economic agents, scattered and predominantly craft-oriented, who have to cope with the diverse requirements of their clients and with a production cycle which is long-term in character.

### Forecasting

Although every Community country possesses some form of medium or long term forecasting especially for housing and, possibly, civil engineering equipment, the reference criteria adopted often differ widely, which makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to compare national objectives.

What is required:

1) in the immediate future is:

- (a) to draw up a common terminology for types of building and prime contractors, to adopt common definitions, and harmonize units of measurement and methods of data-presentation;

(b) to improve and amplify current statistics on building and civil engineering work, particularly those referring to the construction of residential and non-residential buildings;

2) and stage by stage:

(a) to promote the preparation of national forecasting which should gradually become comparable from country to country, concerning future building and civil engineering operations;

(b) to pursue efforts to make further data available to the Commission, in addition to those mentioned above, so that it can take action on the basis of valid information.

#### Removal of technical and legal obstacles

Technical standards and all kinds of building regulations govern the industry in all the Community countries and at all stages, even at local level, the authorities have laid down standards, notably in the areas of fire prevention, health protection, and safety in the sense of structural stability.

All these provisions differ profoundly, either in principle or in being legally enforceable or otherwise, or in the way they are applied.

A number of specific steps should be taken as a matter of urgency:

- a short glossary should be compiled of the main legal and technical terms used in the national laws and regulations relating to the building industry;
- an inventory should be made of the main provisions, laid down by national law, regulation or administrative action, which govern the building industry;
- a report should be prepared on the functional requirements and basic principles to be adopted as regards checking on the structural safety of the types of building under consideration, as well as a report on fire-prevention;
- a European procedure should be worked out for the technical approval of building materials and procedures.

In addition, an action programme on the following points should gradually be implemented:

- . modular coordination
- . thermal insulation
- . soundproofing
- . the basic technical requirements underlying all building regulations, and methods of formulating these in terms of physical performance.



### Stepping up research

In the immediate future, the regular appearance of new materials, more efficient use of traditional materials, and the rationalization of building methods imply a constant research effort on a cooperative basis, with the ultimate aim of providing a public service in the widest sense of the term. A topical example is the possibility of counteracting the effects of the energy crisis through the widespread adoption of thermal insulation for buildings.

It remains true, nevertheless, that an intensive research and development effort, should be undertaken and completed at Community level, into the most modern construction processes, often with the use of new materials.

To achieve this goal several general, and some more specific, actions should be undertaken:

- actual and potential research facilities in the Member States should be determined;
- a joint classification system for national research projects should be established;
- research should be undertaken into areas of common interest, particularly such as arise out of technical and legal obstacles;
- there should be a wider dissemination of the knowledge acquired in the course of research into areas of common interest.

These are a few of the actions, selected from a much larger number, which will be required if joint Community action in this sector is to make any progress at a later date. Community action is no substitute for projects already undertaken by the United Nations Social and Economic Council, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), the European Committee for Concrete (CEB), or the European Convention of Constructional Steelwork Associations (CECM). It is merely that the Community has different means of action at its disposal, and cooperation with other international organizations could therefore be very fruitful.

## 130 MILLION WOMEN

International Women's Year is an opportunity for concentrating public attention on the 130 million women living in the nine Member States of the European Community. In a speech made in Dublin on 1 February 1975 Dr Hillery, the Member of the European Commission with special responsibility for Social Affairs, explained the efforts being made to help women who go out to work. There are no fewer than 35 million such women, i.e., more than one third of the total working population.

### Some figures

Although in the past most women out at work were young and single, today almost two out of three in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany and the United Kingdom are married. Out of every two women at work in Italy and Luxembourg, one at least is married. Only in Ireland and the Netherlands is the proportion rather lower.

It is a well known fact that women who go out to work usually do jobs requiring little experience but a great deal of skill; they are also employed in high output industries, and these two reasons combined explain why women's jobs are much less well paid than those of many men. In addition women rarely register at employment exchanges, so that employment statistics are far from giving a true picture of the number of women looking for work. Even if we take statistics at their face value, at present almost one unemployed person out of two in Belgium, France and Germany is a woman, although women comprise almost one third of the total working population of these countries.

### Action required

The first goal is "equal pay for equal work". The Treaty of Rome has made provision for this since 1958. But it is only recently that a Community Directive has specifically embodied this commitment (see I&S No 1/75). Dr Hillery said that he now hoped to see this Directive supplemented by a further one to eliminate the discrimination, to which women are subject, in terms of job opportunity, vocational training, working conditions, social security and promotion.

The European Commission will soon be handing down its Opinion on the programme, which has been drawn up to help women, so as to achieve some of the objectives already adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Community in its Social Action Programme. The Council of Ministers for Social Affairs should be in a position to hand down its decision on the Commission proposals by the end of June.

It is expected that the basic proposal in the programme will be that all jobs shall be open equally to men and women. It will then be necessary also to ensure that all vocational training courses will be open equally to women and men. No discrimination should be made between men and women in the matter of access to posts of responsibility or, to promotion in general. Only recently a Directive issued requires harmonization of legislation on the matter of equal pay. A special programme on the position of women would be the logical sequence, crowning the principle of "equal pay for equal work".

## THE QUALITY OF WATER IN BATHING AREAS

Concerned to protect both the environment and public health, the Commission has been examining existing standards for the quality of water in bathing areas. In a proposed directive which it has forwarded to the Council of Ministers, the Commission lists a number of measures which if respected should be helpful in defining the minimum quality standard for water in bathing areas.

The microbiological and physico-chemical factors differ so widely between fresh-water and sea-water that the Commission feels it would be appropriate to establish two different sets of standards, depending on whether the bathing area involved has fresh-water or sea-water. However, the Commission covers only authorized or accepted bathing areas. If a bather wishes to use areas that are not authorized he does so at his own risk.

The need for general monitoring of ambient conditions in a bathing area must be emphasized. With a view to gathering geographical and topological information, and establishing the volume and nature of all polluting wastes or potential pollutants, and their effects, in terms of the distance between the source of pollution and the area of water concerned, detailed and repeated inspection of the up-stream reaches of fresh-water flows, and of ambient conditions, in the case of standing fresh water (lakes), or sea-water, must be carried out.

Sampling should therefore be conducted at regular intervals, the frequency depending on the popularity of the area and the number of bathers. It is recommended that special attention should be paid to areas used by some 10 000 persons per km of beach or river bank. Samples should generally be taken in areas where most bathers congregate and preferably at a depth of 30 cm below the water surface.

The quantities of coliform bacilli, streptococci, salmonella and viruses present in the bathing water should be determined by analysis; not the slightest trace of mineral oil film or of foam should exist on the surface of the water; neither should it be possible to detect the slightest odour of phenol; the beach should be completely clear of any tarry residues. Most important, we should aim at eliminating all unnatural flotsam - wood, plastic, bottles, and containers made of glass, plastic, rubber or any other material that man may yet invent.

To achieve this result will require much care and attention, as well as a public education programme. Provision has therefore been made by the Commission for allowing a period of eight years, after the directive comes into force, for bringing bathing areas up to the standard indicated. From the point of view of holiday-makers and bathers this is rather a long period. However, if we consider that no national regulations are as extensive, or as technically scientific as the project drawn up by the Commission, eight years is a reasonable period.